

WI-432

1888-89

R. E. Powell House
Salisbury (Site)
Public

The construction of the Route 50 corridor through the center of Salisbury required the demolition of a scores of houses and other buildings that lined North Division, Church, and Broad streets. One of these dwellings, the R. E. Powell house, was a particularly elaborate late nineteenth-century dwelling erected shortly after the 1886 fire. Documented by the *Salisbury Advertiser* to 1888-89, the newspaper stated on June 8, 1888:

R. E. Powell, Esq. has closed a contract for the erection of a new residence on the site of the one burned in 1886. The new building will be a handsome structure, if we can judge from the plans. It is to be erected on the same foundation and to have rooms the same. The elevations will be somewhat different. There will be a square bay window at the northwest corner with gable on the roof. The building will have two other gables on the Broad St. side. The front will have no tower over the front entrance as the other building did. The building which burned, including the heating and other fixtures, cost about \$9,700. Mr. C. R. Jones is the architect. Mr. T. H. Slemons the contractor.

True to the reporter's description the house, the stylish and expensive residence was defined by projecting bays, gable roofs and porches, which were used in an overall asymmetrical plan that appealed to late nineteenth-century taste. The turned posts, balusters and spindles, as well as the stylized sunburst motif incorporated in the porch pediment and upper gables were decorative elements common to the architectural decoration popularized by Charles Locke Eastlake (1833-1906), an English interior designer.

MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: R. E. Powell House

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-432

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture
2. Geographic Orientation: Eastern Shore
3. Chronological/Development Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance
1870-1930
4. Resource Type(s): Site

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. WI-432

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic R. E. Powell House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number North Division Street ☐ not for publication

city, town Salisbury ☐ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Wicomico

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Wicomico County Courthouse folio

city, town Salisbury state MD 21801

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. WI-432

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☒ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The R. E. Powell house formerly stood on the southeast corner of the intersection of North Division and Broad streets in the center of Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland. The two-and-a-half story, ell-shaped Victorian frame dwelling faced southwest with the hip roof oriented on a northwest/southeast axis. The house was razed when US Route 50 was built through Salisbury.

Erected in 1888-89, the two-and-a-half story, ell-shaped main block was supported on a raised brick foundation, and the exterior was clad in a combination of plain weatherboard siding and fishscale shingles. The multiple gabled roof was covered with patterned slate. Attached to the side of the rear service wing was a single story section. Standing in the yard was a two-room privy which was relocated before demolition to the backyard of Poplar Hill Mansion. (See WI-8)

The southwest (main) elevation was an asymmetrical facade with a centrally located entrance sheltered by a hip roof, turned post porch. Flanking the entrance on the south were long single-pane windows featuring colored glass panes in the upper sash. Each window had louvered shutters. The turned post porch had a turned baluster handrail, and a bracketed eave with a spindle gallery under the porch roof. Projecting forward in the entrance bay was a cross gabled extension of the porch with a sunburst pattern carving within the gable-front pediment. The front steps were flanked by turned baluster handrails. Finishing the cap of the roof was a decorative cresting. Above the porch roof the second floor of the main block was pierced by single-pane sash windows featuring colored glass perimeter panes in the upper sashes. The center bay had a paired set of narrow windows. Each window opening was flanked by louvered shutters. Rising atop the southern two bays of the front facade was a large gable front featuring paired attic windows piercing a field of fishscale shingles. The peak of the gable end was filled with a decorative carving supported by brackets. Centered on the roof was a large gable roofed dormer pierced by paired multi-pane windows. The steeply pitched roof, finished with extended eaves and supported by small brackets, was covered with patterned slate. Rising through the center of the house were tall brick chimneys finished with corbelled caps. A metal cresting finished the ridge of the hip roof.

To the north of the entrance bay was a projecting gable roofed pavilion that had a two-story, three-sided bay front. The bay was pierced by single-pane sash windows that had small colored glass perimeter panes in the upper sash. The top of the bay window was capped by a cross gabled roof, which had small pendant drops hanging from the outside corners. Piercing the gable

(Continued)

8. Significance

Survey No. WI-432

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

C. R. Jones—architect

Specific dates 1888–89 **Builder/Architect** T. H. Slemons, contractor

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The construction of the Route 50 corridor through the center of Salisbury required the demolition of a scores of houses and other buildings that lined North Division, Church, and Broad streets. One of these dwellings, the R. E. Powell house, was a particularly elaborate late nineteenth-century dwelling erected shortly after the 1886 fire. Documented by the *Salisbury Advertiser* to 1888–89, the newspaper stated on June 8, 1888:

R. E. Powell, Esq. has closed a contract for the erection of a new residence on the site of the one burned in 1886. The new building will be a handsome structure, if we can judge from the plans. It is to be erected on the same foundation and to have rooms the same. The elevations will be somewhat different. There will be a square bay window at the northwest corner with gable on the roof. The building will have two other gables on the Broad St. side. The front will have no tower over the front entrance as the other building did. The building which burned, including the heating and other fixtures, cost about \$9,700. Mr. C. R. Jones is the architect. Mr. T. H. Slemons the contractor.¹

True to the reporter's description the house, the stylish and expensive residence was defined by projecting bays, gable roofs and porches, which were used in an overall asymmetrical plan that appealed to late nineteenth-century taste. The turned posts, balusters and spindles, as well as the stylized sunburst motif incorporated in the porch pediment and upper gables were decorative elements common to the architectural decoration popularized by Charles Locke Eastlake (1833–1906), an English interior designer.

¹ *Salisbury Advertiser*, June 9, 1888.

Survey No. WI-432

PS-2746

7.1 DESCRIPTION

R. E. Powell House, WI-432

Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland (Site)

end was a tripartite window fixed under a decorative peak carving. The eaves of the roof were extended and the rafter ends exposed with decorative ends. Attached to northwest corner of the house was a one-bay turned post porch.

The southeast side elevation was defined by a two-and-a-half story pavilion the projected slightly from the adjacent wall of the main block. Paired windows lighted the first and second floors. The first floor of the pavilion was sheathed with plain weatherboard siding, while the second floor was covered with fishscale shingles. The top of the pavilion was distinguished by a gable roof with extended eaves and small bracket supports under the lower corners. The gable end was pierced by a paired attic window, and the peak was filled with a decorative carving. Finishing the top of the roof was a metal cresting.

The two-room privy for this house was moved to the backyard of the Poplar Hill mansion.

Salisbury Advertiser, June 9, 1888

Article on **Riverton**

Salisbury Advertiser, June 9, 1888

Building Notes

R. E. Powell, Esq. Has closed a contract for the erection of a new residence on the site of the one burned in 1886. The new building will be a handsome structure, if we can judge from the plans. It is to be erected on the same foundation and to have rooms the same. The elevations will be somewhat different. There will be a square bay window at the northwest corner with gable on the roof. The building will have two other gables on Broad St. side. The front will have no tower over the front entrance as the other building did. The building which burned, including the heating and other fixtures, cost about \$9,700. Mr. C. R. Jones is the architect. Mr. T. H. Slemmons the contractor.

The Misses Fish, who resided on Main St. before the fire opposite the Peninsula hotel, began under contract with Mr. R. D. Abdell a new residence on Division St. above F. C. Todd, Esq. this week. The lot is that portion of the Stinson property near the corner of Isabella and Division Sts. That fronts the latter street. The building will be entirely different from anything in the town. The first floor will have four rooms. It will be unique and quite handsome. Across the whole front will extend a porch, and to the south side. There will be a two story octagonal bay window at the southeast corner.

Salisbury Advertiser, June 23, 1888

Salisbury's Business Boom

Good Article on the Brisk Business Activity

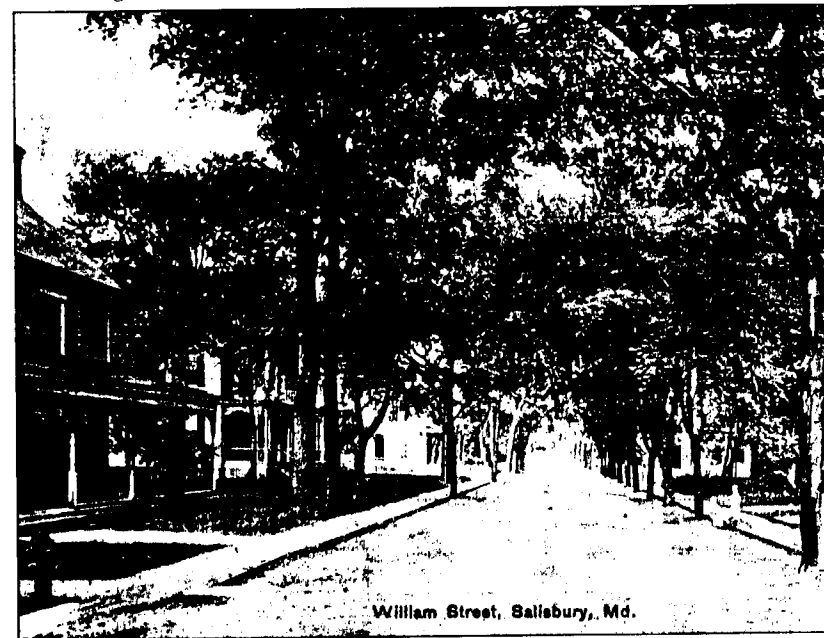


THE R.E. POWELL HOUSE. There was an earlier house on the site, but it was burned in 1886. This was the only place where the fire crossed Division Street. The new house was completed in 1889, had speaking tubes in every room, and frescoing by an artist from Wilmington. Its outside privy was not burned and has been moved to Poplar Hill Mansion. The privy was no longer used and the house was connected to the new sewer that ran north on Division Street to Isabella.

WI-432



WILLIAM STREET FROM DIVISION. The Grier-Gillis House steps can be seen on the right. Behind it is the Arthur Leonard House, which has been replaced by the John Leonard House. Behind that is the Walter Disharoon House, which has forms in front of it for a porch. The trees at right are still in the street.



William Street, Salisbury, Md.

WILLIAM STREET WEST FROM POPLAR HILL. The porch on the house on the left is the Perry-Cooper House, which has been magnificently restored. Behind it is the Robert Ellegood House and beyond that the Jay Williams House. The street is a one-block street. On the right, the house is still there, but unrestored. The Jay Williams House is still there, but unrestored. The street is a one-block street.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5860 LNW
(HEBRON)

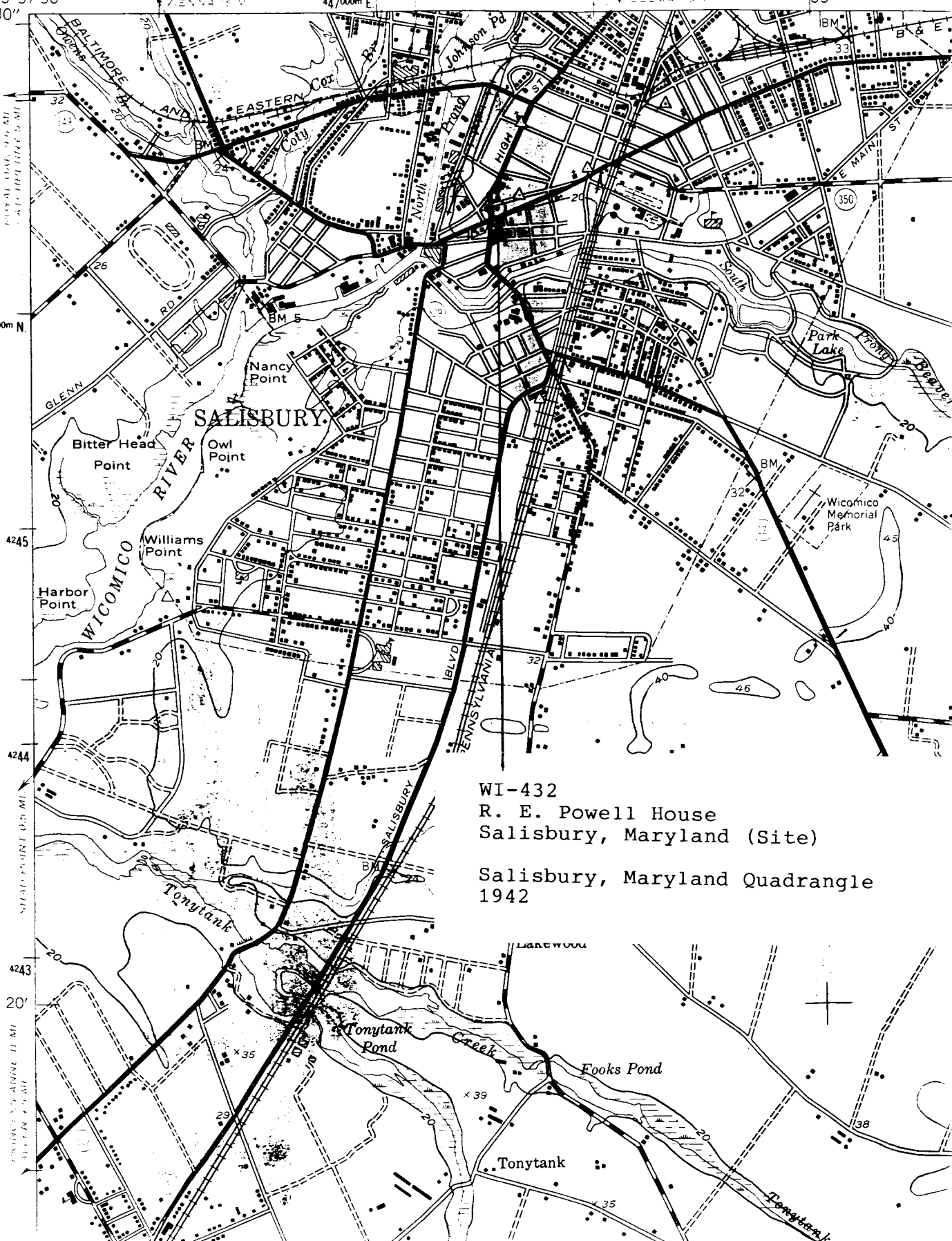
75°37'30"
38°22'30"

CAMPSIDE M

447000m E

35'

4246000m N



WI-432
R. E. Powell House
Salisbury, Maryland (Site)

Salisbury, Maryland Quadrangle
1942